

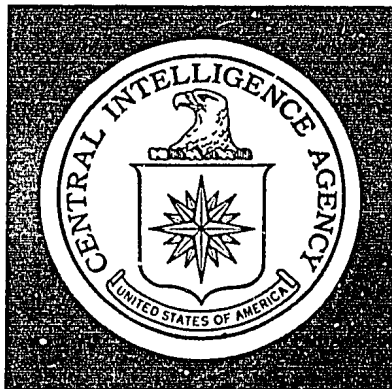
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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# Intelligence Memorandum

*The Situation at the Port of Haiphong*

**Secret**

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February 1968

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
12 February 1968

## INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation at the Port of HaiphongSummary

The extent of congestion at the port of Haiphong during the past year has been almost wholly a function of the volume of seaborne imports rather than of the inability to discharge cargoes and clear them through the port area.

Since June and July 1967, when congestion at the port reached its peak, Hanoi has successfully carried out measures to relieve the situation. The volume of seaborne imports has risen each month since September and reached a record level in January of this year. Concurrently, the average layover time for ships in the harbor area declined monthly from a record high in August of 33 days to 15 days in December and January. The accumulation of cargoes in open storage, which fell off in October, has risen slowly as imports increased. However, the continual turnover of these cargoes is evidence that the North Vietnamese are clearing the port and that the goods are being distributed inland.

If continued, the marked surge in seaborne imports noted during January 1968 may revive some of the earlier congestion. Some shipping will probably experience longer delays in unloading than 15 days, and the accumulation of cargoes in open storage will probably increase. Nevertheless, Hanoi seems to have improved the organization of the port and to be capable of holding congestion below the high levels experienced in mid-1967.

Note: This memorandum was produced by CIA. It was prepared by the Office of Economic Research.

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Problems in Discharging Import Cargoes

1. Record imports [redacted]

[redacted] and high numbers of ship arrivals during March-June 1967 led to severe congestion in Haiphong during June and July.\* This congestion greatly increased the layover time of ships calling at the port and added to the cargo accumulated in open storage near the wharfs.\*\* The discharge of cargo has been aggravated further by persistent silting in the port and its approaches.

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2. Average layover times for departing ships skyrocketed from 12 days in April to a record high in August of 33 days. Layover times decreased steadily after August as imports returned to lower and more normal levels during the summer months. By December, layover time was only 15 days or slightly above the monthly average for 1966. The decrease in layover time occurred despite the destruction in September of the bridges linking Haiphong with the interior. [redacted]

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3. [redacted]

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[redacted] Although the average layover time of ships departing in January was the same as in

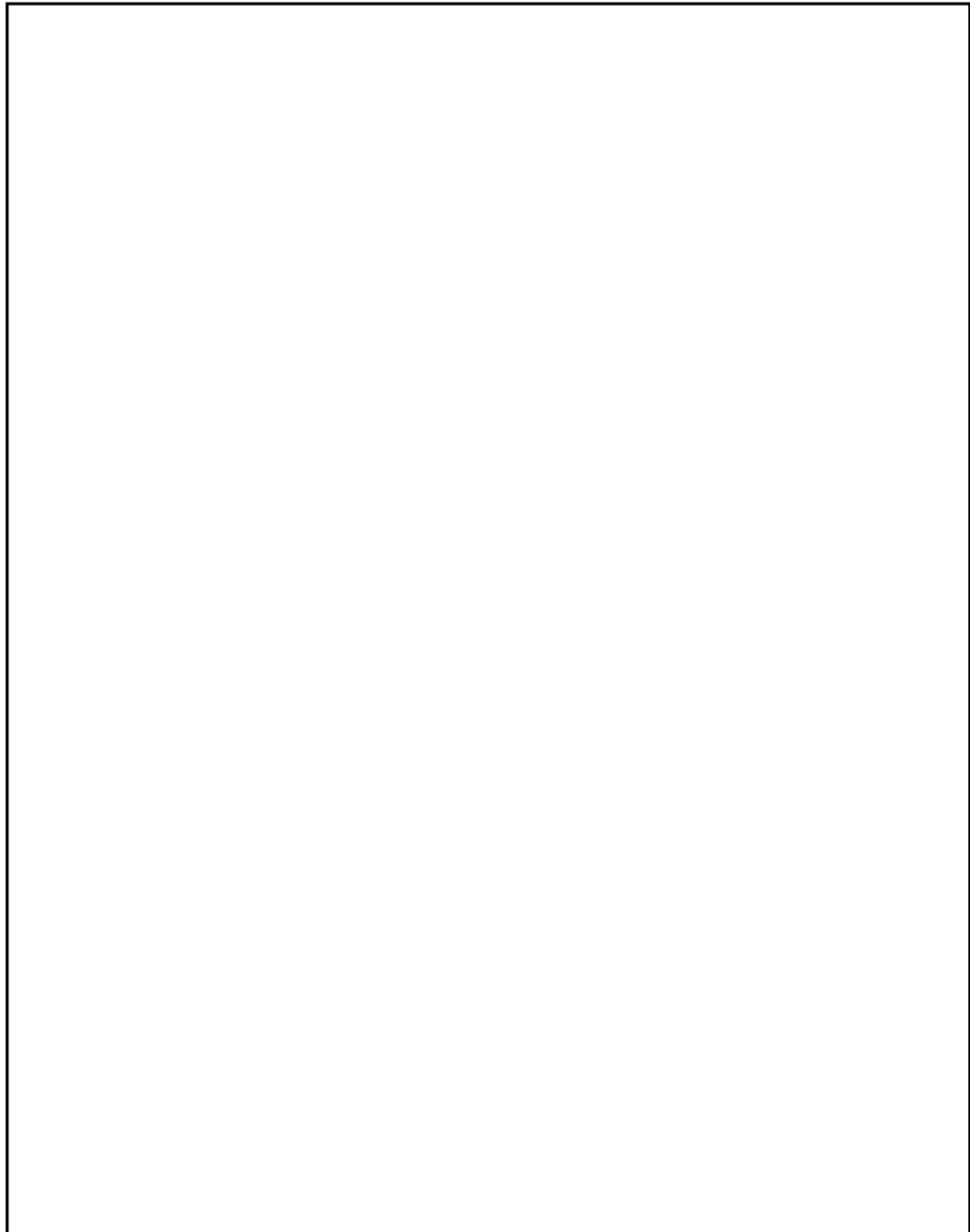
\* *Ninety-nine percent of North Vietnam's seaborne imports of 1.3 million tons in 1967 moved through the port of Haiphong.*

\*\* *Large concentrations of cargo in open storage adjacent to the wharf area of Haiphong and its warehouses were not uncommon by mid-1967. It is possible that some of this material is stored in the open because of the safe haven provided by the proximity of foreign merchant ships.*

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December, an increase is likely in February. The congestion, however, probably will not become as serious as that during the worst months of 1967, because North Vietnam's fleet of lighters and barges was expanded during 1967. The additional lighterage is used both to speed the discharge of cargo from ships at berths and to increase the number of ships that can be unloaded at anchor.



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